

THE MINUTES OF THE 314th STATED MEETING
OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

26 August 1987

Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman

Present: Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman
David Brownlee
David Hollenberg
Jason Nathan
William D. Thompson
David Baldinger, Deputy Director, City Planning Commission
Christopher Cashman, Deputy Director, Office of Director of
Commerce
Rebecca Northrop, Director of Policy and Planning, Office
of Housing
John Street, Esq., Councilman, Fifth District
David Wismer, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Licenses
and Inspections

Frederick Bader, Esq., Assistant City Solicitor, Law
Department
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Assistant Historic Preservation
Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Merrie Winston, Historical Architect
Sally Elk, Historic Research Technician
Carmen Weber, Archaeologist
Terri Koob, Executive Secretary
Maureen Heaney, Clerk Stenographer I

Also: Edna M. Irving, Councilman Street's Office
J. Shane Creamer and Hugh J. Bracken, Attorneys for the
Sameric Corporation
Murray G. Isard, Sameric Corporation
Samuel Evans, Linpco Company
Patrick J. Broderick, Broderick & Karoszkiewicz Attorneys
Harold Ash, Charles and Elaine Obey, Awbury Neighbors
Association
Mary K. Malcolm, Thomas Noon and Charles Johnson, Residents
of Front Street
Mary Lou McFarland, Executive Director, Preservation
Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Roger Prichard, Old City Civic Association
Patrick Starr, Foundation for Architecture
And others.

Unless otherwise noted, all actions taken herein are the results of motions correctly made, seconded and carried.

THE MINUTES of the 313th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held on 29 July 1987, Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman, were reviewed and approved.

THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held on 13 August 1987, David Hollenberg, Chairman. Mr. Hollenberg requested that the Commission consider the Report of the Architectural Committee meeting of 13 August 1987 with the exception of the submission for 999 E. Haines Street which will be presented separately. Mr. Hollenberg reported that the additional information requested for 313 Market Street, 1010 Race Street, 2030 Race Street, 227 Fitzwater Street and the Family Court Building at 1801 Vine Street has not been received.

The Commission unanimously voted to approve the Report of the Architectural Committee meeting of 13 August 1987 with the exception of the 999 E. Haines Street proposal.

Mr. Hollenberg next introduced the submission for 999 E. Haines Street. Mr. Hollenberg explained that a "stop work order" was issued by the Department of Licenses and Inspections for work being done at 999 E. Haines Street without a building permit. This completed work includes the removal of a hipped roof from a garage on the grounds of this property. The applicants propose to install a steeply-pitched gable roof structure containing a large Palladian style window on each gable end. Photographs of the garage before and after the work was begun were presented to the Commission.

Ms. Siemiontkowski informed the Commission that some question exists concerning the validity of designation of 999 E. Haines Street. Ms. Siemiontkowski reported that the Commission in May of 1981 voted to designate 999 E. Haines Street. However, in June 1981, the Commission agreed "to withhold, for a time, the certification of 999 E. Haines Street as requested by the owner pending his further consideration of the matter. The Commission further directed the staff to contact the owner and to attempt to explain the implications of local certification and to answer any question regarding all benefits and restrictions." Mr. Tyler stated that he did speak to the owner on the telephone following the meeting in June 1981; however, the matter was never brought before the Commission for another vote. Ms. Siemiontkowski advised the Commission that the major issue to be considered today is whether the Commission has jurisdiction over this building.

Elaine A. Obey, representing the Awbury Arboretum Neighbors Association, voiced her concern over the enlargement of the garage roof. Mrs. Obey also reported that a nomination had been submitted in 1985 for entry of Awbury Arboretum on the National Register of Historic Places.

Extensive discussion followed. The Commission finally agreed that 999 E. Haines Street was not a validly designated building and that the Philadelphia Historical Commission has no jurisdiction over proposed alterations to the building or over demolition.

The Commission decided, however, that the property warranted consideration for designation. Dr. Brownlee requested that the original nomination file of 999 E. Haines Street be submitted to the Committee on Historic Designation for its consideration. Richard Tyler recommended that a letter be sent out immediately notifying the owner of 999 E. Haines Street that his property is being considered for historic designation.

The Commission members voted in favor of sending the nomination form for 999 E. Haines Street to the Committee on Historic Designation by a vote of six to four. The six Commission members in favor of nominating 999 E. Haines Street for historic designation were David Brownlee, David Hollenberg, Rebecca Northrop, John Street, William D. Thompson and David Wismer. The four opposing votes were cast by David Baldinger, Christopher Cashman, Edward Montgomery and Jason Nathan.

THE REPORT of the Committee on Historic Designation of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held on 15 May 1987, David Brownlee, Chairman.

The Hertz Lot/West Shipyard, Delaware Avenue and Vine Street

Dr. Brownlee gave a brief summary of the archaeological significance of this site accompanied by a slide presentation by Randal Baron. Dr. Brownlee explained that this nomination was first brought to the Commission at the 24 June 1987 meeting. At that time a sixty-day delay on designation of this site was granted to allow the owner time to conduct test borings. Dr. Brownlee reviewed the various criteria to be considered in evaluating the site for designation and recommended that the Hertz Lot be designated at this time.

Patrick Broderick, representing the owner of the Hertz Lot/ West Shipyard, addressed the Commission and thanked the staff and Dr. Brownlee for their cooperation. Mr. Broderick concluded by stating that he and his client are happy to participate with the Historical Commission in the designation of Philadelphia's first archaeological site.

The Commission unanimously voted to designate as an historic site the Hertz Lot located at Delaware Avenue and Vine Street.

THE REPORT on the Activities of the Philadelphia Historical Commission staff for 15 July 1987 - 15 August 1987, Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer, was reviewed and approved for filing.

OLD BUSINESS

The Boyd Theater, 1908-1910 Chestnut Street

Richard Tyler reported that in May of this year a demolition permit application was presented to the Commission. At that time, Historical Commission action was deferred for two months pending the receipt and review of additional information from the owners of the Boyd Theater.

The information was requested pursuant to the requirements of Section 7(e), 7(f).6 and .7 of the ordinance. To date, this information has not been received. Mr. Tyler further reported that owing to the fact that the Boyd Theater reopened in June of this year, he requested from the owners financial records for the Boyd since its reopening. This information, also, has not yet been submitted. #

Mr. Tyler reported to the Commission members that a preliminary evaluation of the partial documentation submitted by Sameric Corporation was conducted by Cushman and Wakefield. Copies of this evaluation were distributed to the Commission members prior to today's meeting. J. Shane Creamer, attorney for the Boyd, requested a copy of the Cushman and Wakefield preliminary evaluation. The Commission voted unanimously to give Mr. Creamer a copy of this document. They stressed, however, the very preliminary nature of the evaluation and warned Mr. Creamer that the findings contained in the Cushman Wakefield evaluation will not be accepted as a final report.

At this time, Mr. Creamer introduced Samuel Evans, III, who is currently operating partner of the Urban Division of the Linpro Company. Mr. Evans presented to the Historical Commission his written evaluation of the premises 1908-1910 Chestnut Street and offered oral testimony relating to his findings. It was the opinion of Mr. Evans that:

1. the sale of the premises is impracticable;
2. rental of the premises would not provide a reasonable rate of return; and,
3. other potential uses of the premises are foreclosed.

The Historical Commission members thanked Mr. Evans for his report and presentation.

Following considerable discussion, the Historical Commission advised Mr. Creamer that additional information was needed to comply with the requirements of subsections 7(e), 7(f).7 of the preservation ordinance. These sections call for the identification and complete factual analysis of specific reuses for the Boyd Theatre which can be classified as reasonable and which may be consistent with preservation. For example, reuses such as, but not limited to, mini-theaters, a performing arts center, a commercial retail operation, a restaurant and a discotheque would qualify as alternate uses demanding serious study and evaluation.

Richard Tyler suggested that the Commission extend its deferral of action on Sameric's demolition permit application until the additional requested materials have been received and evaluated. A formal vote will be taken at the November Commission meeting.

Dr. Brownlee informed the Commission that the Corporation for Theaters provides a service for an \$85.00 fee which includes inspection and evaluation of the possible reuses for movie theaters.

Mr. Creamer asked the Commission if it could state exactly what information is required of them. John Street stated that the owner of the Boyd will need to present information on the potential reuses of the property.

The Commission members agreed that for the future formal guidelines should be drawn up with the assistance of the Law Department. This list could be provided to applicants who are seeking permission to demolish a designated building and would eliminate the dilemma of numerous repeated appearances only to discover that the information presented is insufficient in order to make a decision.

After considerable discussion, by a vote of nine to one, the Commission agreed to defer action on the Boyd until more information is available. A formal vote will be taken at the November meeting. The one opposing vote was cast by John Street.

NEW BUSINESS

National Register Nomination

Physicians and Dentists Building - 1831-1833 Chestnut Street

Mr. Tyler stated that this building possesses significance as one of the best preserved of the very few standing early skyscrapers designed by the nationally famous architectural and engineering firm of the Wilson Brothers. The building also possesses historical significance as probably the oldest professional building remaining in the city.

Mr. Tyler informed the Commission that this building meets National Register criteria as an important work of nationally significant architects, for its unusual engineering design and for its historical role as a new building type, the professional building.

The Commission unanimously voted to endorse the entry of 1831-1833 Chestnut Street on the National Register of Historical Places.

The Seymour House - 260 W. Johnson Street

Mr. Tyler stated that the Seymour House possesses significance as one of the finest suburban houses of the important Philadelphia architects Hazelhurst and Huckel. In his opinion, this building meets National Register criteria both as a fine example of its style and the work of these architects.

The Commission unanimously voted to endorse the entry of 260 W. Johnson Street on the National Register of Historic Places.

Annual Meeting of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C.

Mr. Tyler requested permission to use Four Hundred Dollars from the Harry A. Batten Fund to send a staff member to this meeting.

The Commission unanimously voted to approve Mr. Tyler's request.

STATED MEETING

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Heaney
Clerk Stenographer I

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